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FM AMEMBASSY DOHA

TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 7326

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C O N F I D E N T I A L DOHA 001136

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E.O. 12958: DECL: 11/16/2027

TAGS: PGOV PREL IZ IR TU QA

SUBJECT: QATAR LIKELY TO BE ONE OF THE FIRST GCC STATES TO RE-OPEN BAGHDAD EMBASSY

REF: A. STATE 157485

¶B. DOHA 1042

Classified By: Charge d'Affaires Michael A. Ratney,
for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

¶1. (C) P/E Chief delivered Ref A demarche December 5 to MFA Director of GCC Affairs Yousef Al-Jaber. Al-Jaber said the GCC heads of state discussed how to proceed on stabilizing Iraq in their December 3-4 Doha summit. According to Al-Jaber, the GCC states believed that the security situation in Iraq has improved. There was nonetheless reluctance on the part of the GCC to increase its engagement on the issues that Ambassador Crocker discussed with Qatar's Prime Minister (see Ref B) and other Gulf leaders in October and November. Further improvements in the security situation were first needed.

¶2. (C) When P/E Chief reminded Al-Jaber of the Iranian presence and activity in Baghdad, Al-Jaber conceded that the real issue was a demonstrable political balance between Sunni and Shi'a on the ground in Iraq. He said, in this respect, the GCC was looking to the United States to help the Iraqis amend their constitution. Al-Jaber said the GCC states also held the view that Iraq's border with Iran must be secured. If more progress in this area were evident, the time frame for GCC states to renew their diplomatic presence in Baghdad would be shortened.

¶3. (C) Asked if the GCC states would re-establish a diplomatic presence in Iraq alone or in concert, Al-Jaber said different states would go at different speeds. He was confident, however, that Oman and Qatar would be the first two GCC members to re-establish a diplomatic presence in Baghdad. On the return of expatriate Iraqis to their homeland, Al-Jaber noted this was already underway, especially from Syria. He said the improving security environment was the best inducement to Iraqis to return, but that GCC states would be politically supportive of this goal.

¶4. (C) Comment: Al-Jaber was the MFA primary orchestrator of the recent GCC Summit, dealt directly with the Amir and Prime Minister of Qatar on many facets of the agenda, and is well-informed on GCC perspectives. He did not address directly the question of extending an invitation to the Iraqi leadership for bilateral visits. When that issue was raised, he pointed out the need for greater "political balance" between the Shi'a and Sunni in Iraq.

RATNEY